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COMIC SHOP NEWS™

Witchblade/Red Sonja: Not Your Average Crossover!

You know the inter-company crossover formula: characters suspect one another fight ensues, confusion is straightened out, characters join forces to fight the *real* bad guy.

Well, that's exactly the formula that Dynamite Entertainment and Top Cow Productions were determined to avoid in ***Witchblade/Red Sonja.***

"Let's get this out of the way right now: this is *not* your typical crossover," writer *Doug Wagner* said. "There's no time traveling, no merging of universes, no soul swapping, and no messages in a bottle. The first issue won't have the two heroes fighting against each other until they figure out who the real villain is. If that's what you're here for, you've come to the wrong place.

"***Witchblade/Red Sonja #1*** is the beginning of a grisly trial for both characters. Red Sonja and Sara Pezzini are about to plummet into despair and hopelessness, both physically and emotionally. Their beliefs and courage will be tested, and it will take more than just either heroine brandishing their fabled weapons to overcome this threat. Humanity as they know it is at risk. And if one fails, they both fail."

Who came up with the idea of bringing Red Sonja and Sara Pezzini together? After all, it's not an obvious team-up. "It was an idea that came from the Dynamite offices," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "And I disagree that it's not an obvious team-up, once you consider the history of the Witchblade, with the gauntlet having been around for a millennium, and the fact that Red Sonja has come through the ages fighting Kulan Gath and other villains. Just from reading ***Marvel Team-Up #79*** and the Spider-Man/Red Sonja crossover, you can see a lot of threads that come together. And fortunately we have a great writer, *Doug Wagner*, who's helped pull it together in a really cool story that fans will enjoy."

"Doug and Dynamite have really gone to great lengths to create an exciting, unique cross-over event between two of the most recognizable female leads in comics," Top Cow Publisher *Filip Sablik* added. "It would have been easy to come up with some contrived way for these two heroines to meet, but Doug has crafted a story that remains true and taps into the rich mythos of both properties. I'm excited to read it!"

What is the link that makes this story work? "That's plain and simple: the Witchblade," Wagner said. "The Witchblade has been around since the dawn of man, so it makes sense that it would exist during Red Sonja's time as well as in the modern day world of Sara Pezzini. This artifact is the foundation for the entire series. Without it, combining these two characters in the way we all wanted to would have been impossible."

So if there's no time travel, no merging of universes, etc, then how does the story work? "I'm admittedly going to be a bit cryptic here in order to keep from giving too much away," Wagner replied. "This story and how it unfolds is a lot of fun. I'd hate to ruin that for anybody. But to answer your question the best I can, the two characters *do* indeed meet... but *not* in the way you might expect. The story revolves around Sara and Sonja fighting the same villain but in two separate eras. The only way he can be defeated is if our two heroines can find a way to collaborate. That means some how, some way, the two must interact."

Is there a common villain or artifact that will link the Witchblade and Red Sonja parts of the story? "Actually, there's more than one. The villain and the Witchblade will be common plot elements for both characters' stories," Wagner explained." The Witchblade you know, so let's talk Ragniel. Ragniel is one of the Grigori. Just in case you don't know, Grigori is just the more exciting way to say 'fallen angels.' Ragniel is one of the original angels sent to Earth at the rise of man to watch over us. After Ragniel joins the Grigori in rebellion and loses, he's cursed to be imprisoned inside the Earth until man's final days. He's rather a nasty fellow to deal with."

How did Wagner land the gig, since he's had no prior experience with either Witchblade or Red Sonja? "This is my first time writing both characters, but I don't see that as a disadvantage," Wagner said. "Not when I've had the guidance and support of *Joe Rybandt, Filip Sablik,* and *Ron Marz* along the way.

"See, *Ron Marz* and I were initially slated to co-write the series, but Ron's schedule filled up. Both editors and Ron liked the work I was doing at the time, so they handed the reins over to me. What made me the right choice was my fresh perspective on the characters and my willingness to work closely with everyone involved to ensure both companies were well represented and the characters were respected."

How long did it take to come up with this angle that works with two very different characters while avoiding the crossover stereotypes? "It wasn't quick, that's for sure!" Wagner said with a laugh. "Everyone felt it was important to get the story right. The plot development for this series took several months, several meetings, and a few re-writes. As you said, we're dealing with two very different characters with two very different tones to their respective books. Marrying the two successful required a lot of collaboration, and to get it right translated into taking the appropriate time to develop."

Does Wagner see any similarities in Sonja's and Sara's personalities that add to the storyline? "Yes, and this story will explore both their differences *and* their similarities. There's no doubt Red Sonja is a force of nature. When there's evil in the land, you point her at it and wallow in the carnage. On the other side of that coin, Sara is first and foremost a detective. Her approach is analytical, and she only calls on the Witchblade when rationality and reason are no longer viable options.

"However, these two are far more similar than you might think. They've both chosen to be heroes for no other reason than they feel a primal obligation to protect those weaker than themselves. This is a calling that requires that special spark in one's soul. Something they both share."

How is the story structured? Is Wagner presenting alternating chapters, intertwined events, alternating pages involving each character, or something totally different? "Well, this is where the balance of the series became a little tricky," Wagner said. "The structure does indeed involve alternating scenes between Sara and Red Sonja. For example, there will be a scene with Red Sonja, followed by one with Sara. However, it's the same story, so what happens in Sonja's scene directly affects what happens in Sara's...and eventually vice versa."

Does the story fit into continuity for both characters, or is it one of those standalone crossovers that doesn't really fit into either universe. "This story is *definitely* in continuity for both characters," Wagner asserted. "Dynamite and Top Cow wanted to stay away from the cliché crossover involving the alternate universe scenario. As a fan, the alternate universe scenario has always driven me crazy anyway, so I was happy to hear them say it first. I feel there's just something missing when you know a crossover isn't going to have any real consequences for the characters. Sure, it's fun to read, but it never seems to quite quench the thirst for story. The story approaches the two continuities as if they are one and the same. Red Sonja just happens to shed blood in a time well before Sara's."

Earlier, Wagner described the story as presenting "the beginning of a grisly trial for both characters." Do each of them respond to the emotional and physical challenges in the same way? "Definitely not," Wagner said. "As I said earlier, Sonja is a force of nature. The story will become quite personal for her, setting her on a path of brutal vengeance. Sonja is a warrior and as such tends to handle both emotional and physical trauma through sheer willpower. Sara's a much different beast. Her approach is much more systematic. In an identical situation, I could see Sonja coping by calling on her rage, while Sara would fall back on her intellect."

Ultimately, Sonja is considered a more barbaric character, while Sara Pezzini is driven by a desire for justice; does this difference in their personalities play into the story? "Oh, yeah," Wagner said. "Once Sonja is set on a path, she's going to carve a path of destruction no matter what it takes. She'll stop at nothing to accomplish her goal. Sonja is the epitome of vengeance.

"Then, you have Sara. And you're correct—justice *is* an integral part of her character. I mean, c'mon, she's a detective. How do their differences play into the story? There fighting a villain that is a match for either of their personalities, so in order to defeat a villain like Ragniel, they'll need both the barbarian and the detective."

Are other Dynamite-Top Cow crossovers in the works? After all, a ˆ1 crossover story seems like a natural! "Wouldn't that be nice?" Barrucci said with a laugh. "I agree that Jennifer Blood and the Darkness would be a lot of fun—thanks for suggesting the idea!"

Witchblade/Red Sonja #1, the $3.99 kickoff issue of a miniseries by *Doug Wagner & Cezar Razek* with cover art by *Alex Garza,* is scheduled for February release. The book is full-color; only black and white interior art was available at presstime.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

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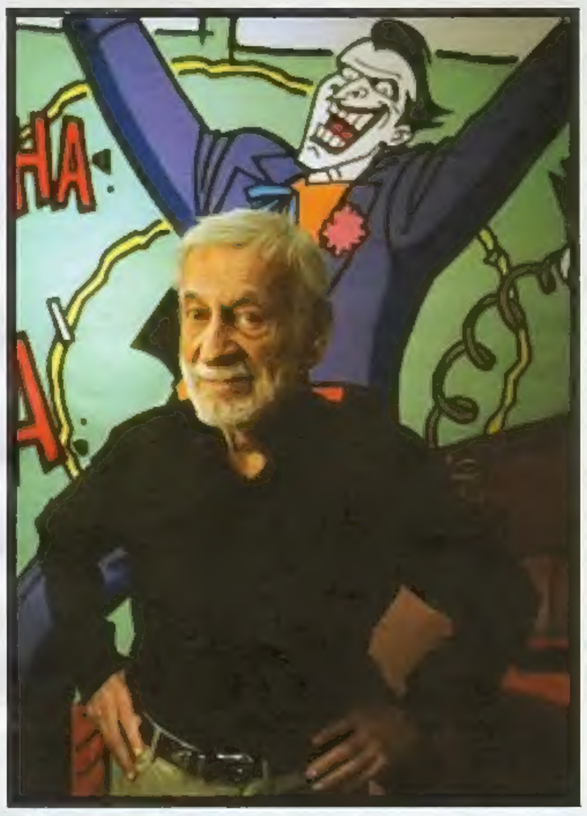

Jerry Robinson Passes

Comics legend *Jerry Robinson*, perhaps the most influential of all Golden Age Batman illustrators and the man who created Robin, the Joker, and other members of Batman's supporting cast, died on December 7th at the age of 89. While best known for his work in ***Batman*** and ***Detective Comics,*** Robinson was a comic book artist, a comic strip creator (***Jet Scott*** and ***Still Life*** are two of his strips), a historian, an illustrator and an activist who supported artists' rights and who helped to negotiate the settlement that saw fellow Golden Age creators *Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster* receive credit and additional compensation for their creation of ***Superman.***

"*Jerry Robinson* illustrated some of the defining images of pop culture's greatest icons," said *Jim Lee*, DC Entertainment Co-Publisher and illustrator of ***Batman: Hush*** and the current New 52 series ***Justice League.*** "As an artist myself, it's impossible not to feel humbled by his body of work. Everyone who loves comics owes Jerry a debt of gratitude for the rich legacy that he leaves behind."

"*Jerry Robinson* was one of the greats," *Dan DiDio*, co-publisher, DC Entertainment, added. "He continued to be a vibrant, creative force, with ideas and thoughts that continue to inspire. Jerry was a great advocate for creators. It was my pleasure to meet and work with him. He will be missed."

CSNsider

•Eisner-Award-winning artist *Gene Ha* is filling in for *Jim Lee* in March. Ha has been tapped as guest illustrator for ***Justice League #7,*** the first issue to jump to the present, revealing the current lineup of Justice League members. Who's in? Who's out? What's changed? You'll find out in March! This story will serve as the prologue to "The Villain's Journey," a new present-day arc illustrated by *Jim Lee* that begins in ***Justice League #9.*** (So who's illustrating #8? Good question!)

This issue will also feature ***Justice League's*** first backup series, ***The Curse of Shazam!*** by *Geoff Johns & Gary Frank.* This backup feature will reveal an all-new origin for the character.

•*Joe Harris* will join *Ethan Van Sciver* as co-writer of ***The Fury of Firestorm: The Nuclear Men*** beginning with the seventh issue. Harris replaces *Gail Simone,* who co-wrote the first six issues of the series. That's not the only creative change coming with ***Fury of Firestorm #7:*** *Ethan Van Sciver* will also supply both interior and cover art for a two-part arc. *Yildiray Cinar* returns as series artist beginning with ***Firestorm #9.***

"The secrets are out, the weapons are amassing, and Ronnie and Jason have barely begun to understand the depths in which they're swimming," series editor *Rachel Gluckstern* said of the new arc. "Once they were normal teens, now they wield incredible powers—and have caused incredible disasters. And it's only *going to* get worse. *Ethan Van Sciver* and Joe Harris are kicking down the doors in this new chapter of ***The Fury of Firestorm,*** taking our heroes into the global arena of politics and power. We're going to learn the truth about Professor Stein and all the plans he set in place, which are now spiraling out of control. Join us for the thrilling new story — 'The Firestorm Protocols.'"

•At long last, the Flash's Rogues Gallery is returning in ***The Flash #7,*** under the leadership of Captain Cold. So who else will the Flash have to deal with in this new arc? You'll find out soon enough!

•After several years at the helm of Marvel's ***Avengers*** franchise (where he wrote the lead titles and masterminded many of the interlinked storylines), *Brian Bendis* has confirmed that he is leaving ***The Avengers, New Avengers,*** and ***Avengers Assemble*** in 2012. "I've been on the Avengers longer than anybody in the history of the book," Bendis told ***Comic Book Resources.*** "When you take everything into account, I've written over two hundred issues. I'm very, very proud of that, and what we have coming up this summer gives me the opportunity to go out on a high note. I know enough about showbiz to know that's a great time to go."

•When *Ann Nocenti* takes over as writer of ***Green Arrow*** beginning with #7, she'll be joined by new artist *Harvey Talibao.* The popular illustrator, whose work has previously appeared in books from Top Cow, Marvel, and Dark Horse, is making his DC debut with this issue, which launches a new arc in which Oliver Queen tries to find a balance between his lives as a billionaire business mogul and a crimefighting vigilante.

•*Adam Glass & Clayton Henry* present a new origin for Harley Quinn in ***Suicide Squad #s 6 & 7.*** "'The Hunt for Harley Quinn' is the mission we've been building to since ***Suicide Squad #1,***" editor *Pat McCallum* said at DC's ***The Source*** blog. "While we'll learn Harley's origin, observe her first meeting with the Joker, see a new Squad lineup *and* learn why King Shark has been acting so weird, it's the last few pages of issue #7 that are a punch to the gut. For the Squad members that survive (and not all will), 'The Hunt for Harley Quinn' will leave them scarred both inside *and* out. Deadshot fans be warned."

SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

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•Marvel has cancelled the recently-announced second printings of ***Kapow Guinness World Records Special***, ***PunisherMax #17***, and ***PunisherMax #18***. The company has no plans to resolicit these reprints.

Here Comes the Night

The New 52's dark corners are about to get a little bit darker with the return of ***The Night Force***, the *Marv Wolfman-Gene Colan* horror-adventure series from the 1980s. Replacing the deceased Colan as artist is *Tom Mandrake*, whose art for the series evokes the fluid, moody Colan approach without slavishly imitating his work.

"When I first conceived ***Night Force*** in the 1980s, my goal was to create the first graphic horror novel, something the industry had never seen before," Wolfman told DC's ***The Source*** blog. "Dark, frightening, adult in theme and content, and heavily character driven. I thought of ***Night Force*** as a series of horror novels about 'real' people – as opposed to those with super-powers – who find themselves caught up in situations far beyond their control or understanding.

"Aside from Baron Winters and Merlin, there would be no other regular characters, so readers would never know whether our cast would live, die, or be completely changed by their horrifying experiences. Because of the ability to write truly intense horror stories that allowed me to go anywhere I wanted, ***Night Force*** has always been my favorite creation.

"This new ***Night Force*** story takes place over hundreds of years, but happens in the space of minutes. It is about a frightened young woman, the product of many generations of secret manipulations, a cop who is about to retire from the force and a cold case investigated by his dead FBI father many years before, a mysterious cult that is affecting the future but began on the night George Washington died, and a secret that will change the course of mankind forever."

"I'm very excited to be working on the new ***Night Force*** mini-series," editor *Jim Chadwick* added. "*Marv Wolfman* has told me that of every comic series he's ever written, ***Night Force*** remains his personal favorite. When you look back on everything Marv has ever done, that is quite an impressive statement. ***Night Force*** was a seminal comic book series of DC when it first appeared in the early 80s. In some ways, you could consider it a bridge between the old style DC horror books of the 70s and the style of comic that would come to eventually define Vertigo in the decade ahead. Certainly, you can trace its influence.

"I was recently rereading some of the early *Alan Moore* issues of ***Swamp Thing***, and Baron Winters is in fact referenced in one of the first John Constantine appearances. It has also been noted that you can see a certain influence on such series as WildStorm's ***Planetary***, created by *Warren Ellis & John Cassaday*. It is one of those series that a lot of comic professionals recall with some fondness.

"But this is clearly not an exercise in nostalgia," Chadwick continued. "Nor is it intended to be a retcon. We are refreshing the Baron's look, but he's still the same character and past continuity does factor into the new series a bit, though you don't need this knowledge at all to follow or enjoy the miniseries. It's more of a tip of the hat to long time readers. Another crucial difference is that the Baron is much more proactive as a character than he's been in the past. The threat that he faces is very direct and the sanctity of his Wintersgate Manor is violated by the greatest threat he's ever dealt with. It's not enough for him to form a new ***Night Force***. He *definitely* has to get his hands dirty in this one.

"I'm really very excited about the artwork that *Tom Mandrake* is producing as well... Certainly there's no one working today who is better at capturing the dark moodiness that a series like ***Night Force*** requires, while at the same time bringing a lot of energy to the page.

"The story is very complex and honestly a bit twisted. I don't think Marv would mind me saying that. This is probably the darkest thing that Marv has ever done. There is a rich cast of characters and some really scary, evil forces in play and the emotions run very high. If you loved the old series, you will really enjoy this. And if you've never read an issue of ***Night Force*** in your life, it doesn't matter. You'll be immediately drawn in and swept away by the ride."

Night Force #1 is slated for March 7th release.

Raising Kaine

As readers of ***Spider-Island*** know, Peter Parker's clone Kaine is back, and his old rapid-degeneration problem is a worry no more. So what does he do next? Well, he heads off to Texas, where he'll be his own man in ***Scarlet Spider*** by *Chris Yost & Ryan Stegman!*

Yost described Kaine as "a guy who used to be semi-crazy, a full-on supervillain, but now he's cured.. This is a guy who, for his entire life since he was born in a test tube, was dying. Now he's not." Rather than spend his new life in the shadow of Peter Parker, he embarks to a new city, Houston.

"It was planned from Day One to set the series in Houston," Yost said, adding that as the series develops, readers would "get to know Houston the way they got to know New York from the comics." Yost did a great deal of research on Houston in preparation for the series, and is supplying visual reference for artist *Ryan Stegman*. In addition, "we've actually had a ton of fans from Houston write in with literally *pages* of information about Houston—what the people are like, what the city is like," Yost added.

"And of course, when we inevitably screw up, those fans are going to write in again!" editor *Steven Wacker* added.

Just as Peter Parker had to learn to be a hero in the early days of Spider-Man, so Kaine must learn to be a hero. "He's not going to wake up in the second issue and say, 'Yay, I'm a hero!' His superhero instincts are really bad," Yost said. "He didn't have Aunt May, he had the Jackal, so his first instinct is probably to kill somebody."

Readers can look for the Scarlet Spider ot appear in other Spider-Man titles, but probably not until early 2013. Likewise, there are no super-teams in the Scarlet Spider's foreseeable future—but as any Marvel reader knows, one should never sy never!...

Scarlet Spider #1, a $3.99 comic, is scheduled for January 11th release.

LOKI—WHEN I RODE OUT TO BATTLE THE TROLLS—
—ONLY YOU AND MY BELOVED SIF STAYED BEHIND, TO SAFEGUARD ASGARD.
BUT NOW I SEE NO SIGN OF HER.
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-13
ALAS, DEAR BROTHER—SHE IS GONE—PERHAPS—FOREVER!
THE LADY SIF FELL FROM HER HORSE, STRIKING HER HEAD.
WHEN SHE AWOKE, IN HER DELIRIUM, SHE THOUGHT HERSELF A HUMAN—
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-14
AND SHE SET OUT FOR WHAT SHE CALLED "HOME"—
—THE PLANET EARTH!
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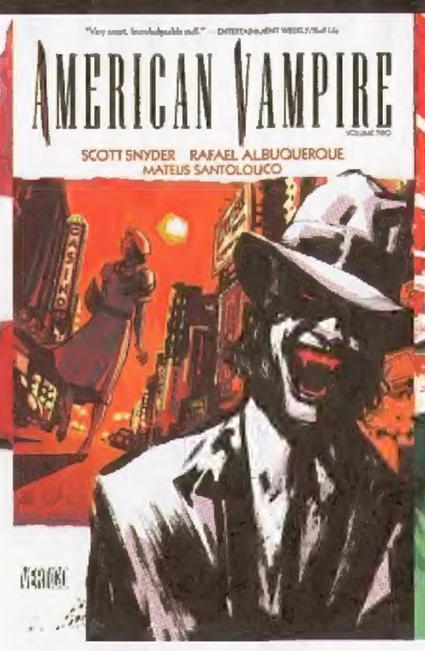

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Legion Lost Finds New Writer

Writer *Fabian Nicieza,* who has chronicled the adventures of ***Legion Lost*** for the first six issues, is departing the book due to an overloaded schedule—but DC already has a new writer ready to step in!

Tom DeFalco, former editor-in-chief at Marvel Comics and acclaimed writer in his own right (his lengthy run on ***Spider-Girl*** is a perfect example of classic storytelling that is equally accessible to readers of all ages), will take over in March; editor *Brian Cunningham* describes him as "a master storyteller," and DeFalco certainly lives up to the description!

On DC's ***The Source*** blog, Cunningham went on to say that DeFalco "understands how to build characters from the inside out and make us care about them. He makes the fantastic feel gigantic and yet at the same time all too human and flawed. He puts his characters through the wringer, crafting entertaining tales that compel us to keep reading...

"Tom came into my office with his infectious enthusiasm, and we just talked about ***Legion Lost*** for over an hour. I really loved what I heard. And then we got on the phone with series artist *Pete Woods,* and the ideas kept flowing. Carrying over subplots that Fabian had been developing, Tom's inclinations felt so completely fresh that we were sold instantly. Here's a taste:

"A crossover with ***Teen Titans*** involving the organization known as N.O.W.H.E.R.E. — with a revelation that will change the entire course of ***Legion Lost!***

"A Timber Wolf romance that could rip the team apart!

"A power struggle for leadership!

"Tyroc has a deadly secret...and the team isn't happy when they learn it!

"And a traitor lurks in their midst!

"I gotta say, I didn't think it possible, but Tom has me even more excited for the series' future! I really hope you'll join us to see his ideas come to fruition."

Legion Lost #7, DeFalco's first issue, is slated for March release.

FCBD Silver Sponsor Books Revealed

Last week, *CSN* told you about the Gold Sponsor Free Comic Book Day 2012 offerings. This week, we have a list of the Silver Sponsor books; these titles will be available from many participating FCBD stores, but not all stores will necessarily carry all of these books.

"There's an incredible depth to this year's Silver Sponsor offerings," said FCBD spokesperson *Leslie Jackson.* "The publishers have created a real opportunity for comic book fans—and those new to comic books—to come in and sample a wide variety of genres and stories with the titles they're publishing."

The Silver Sponsor titles include:

•***Diary of a Zombie Kid*** (Antarctic Press; (*David Hutchinson & Fred Perry*): Think ***Diary of a Wimpy Kid*** with zombies.

•***Arcana Presents The Intrinsic #1*** (Arcana Studios; *Sean O'Reilly, Casey Jones, & others):* Kicking off a horror-adventure series featuring an end-of-the-world threat on a biblical scale.

•***Worlds of Aspen 2012*** (Aspen MLT; *Scott Lobdell, Oliver Nome, David Schwartz,* & others): Showcasing Aspen's new and returning properties for 2012.

•***Burt Ward, Boy Wonder #1*** (Bluewater; *Jeffrey Renaud & Ramon Salas):* He played Robin on the 1960s ***Batman*** TV show, and now he's a hero in his own right!

•***Dune: Origins*** (Boom Studios; *Brian Herbert, Kevin J. Anderson, & Rael Lyra):* Kicking off Boom's adaptation of Herbert & Anderson's books inspired by *Frank Herbert's* ***Dune.***

•***The Incredible Rockhead & Zinc Alloy 2-for-None*** (Capstone; *Scott Nickel, Donald Lemke, CS Jennings, Doug Holgate):* Introducing a pair of offbeat superheroes.

•***Muqtatafaht: A Middle East Comics Anthology*** (Caption Box; various creators): A variety of stories from neary a dozen different Middle Eastern creators.

•***The Censored Howard Cruse*** (CBLDF, *Howard Cruse*): Sneak peek of upcoming original graphic novel by the creator of ***Stuck Rubber Baby.***

•Buffy the Vampire Slayer/The Guild Flip-Book (Dark Horse; *Andrew Chambliss, Felicia Day, Georges Jeanty, Jonathan Case, Dexter Vines):* Spike suggests that Buffy take a "spacecation," while the Guildies head to... the beach?

•***DC Nation Super Sampler/Superman Family Adventures Flip-Book*** (DC; *Art Baltazar, Franco, Dario Brizuela,* & others): Featuring two all-new stories of animation-style ***Green Lantern Adventures*** and ***Young Justice,*** along with a sneak peek of the new ***Superman Family Adventures*** monthly comics series.

•***Marble Season Preview*** (Drawn & Quarterly; *Gilbert Hernandez):* Excerpt from Hernandez' fall 2012 tale of a group of kids growing up in the 1960s.

•***Moomin Color Special*** (Drawn & Quarterly; *Tove Jansson):* Featuring a sneak peek of the all-new ***Moomin*** books, in color for the first time.

•***Walt Disney's Donald Duck Family Comics*** (Fantagraphics; *Carl Barks):* Featuring three stories from Fantagraphics' reprint series.

•Crockett Johnson's Barnaby Sampler (Fantagraphics; *Crockett Johnson):* Selections from the 1940s newspaper strip.

•Overstreet's Comic Book Marketplace 2012 (Gemstone; *Robert M. Overstreet, J.C. Vaughn)* - Spotlighting horror comics.

•***My Favorite Martian Special Edition*** (Hermes: *Dan Spiegle):* Classic 1960s reprints with supplementary material.

•***Witchblade: Unbalanced Pieces*** (Image; *Tim Seeley, Diego Bernard, Fred Benes):* A look at the post-***Artifacts*** life of Sara Pezzini, leading into the next major story arc.

•***Dinosaurs Versus Aliens*** (Liquid; *Grant Morrison, Barry Sonnenfeld, Mukesh Singh):* Intelligent dinosaurs versus sneaky aliens.

•***Graphic Elvis Preview*** (Liquid; *Stan Lee, John Cassaday,* & others): A preview of the upcoming hardcover featuring tales inspired by Elvis's Graceland treasures.

•***Spider-Man: Season One*** (Marvel; *Cullen Bunn & Neil Edwards):* Presenting the first chapter of the original graphic novel.

•Bad Medicine #1 (Oni; *Nunzio DeFillipis, Christina Weir, & Christopher Mitten):* Kickoff tale of a medical suspense-drama.

•***The Smurfs/Disney Fairies Featuring Tinker Bell Flip-Book*** (PaperCutz; various): Highlighting PaperCutz kid-friendly titles, including the new series ***Dance Class*** and ***Ernest & Rebecca.***

•***Under the Faerie Moon Preview*** (Radical; *Terry Rossio* & others): From the co-writer of ***Pirates of the Caribbean*** and ***Shrek*** comes an epic adventure set in the hidden land of Faerie.

•***2000 AD Judge Dredd Special*** (Rebellion; *Rob Williams, Dom Reardon,* & others): Featuring a selection of strips from the UK's best-known comics anthology.

•***Atomic Robo & Friends 2012*** (Red Five; *Brian Clevinger & Scott Wagner):* Featuring an Atomic Robo-Dr. Dinosaur team-up.

•***Finding Gossamyr & The Stuff Of Legend IV*** (Th3rd World; *David Rodriguez, Sarah Ellerton, Charles Paul Wilson):* A brilliant boy and his caretaker are transported to a fantastic land where math is magic; also includes a preview of the next ***Stuff of Legend.***

•***Top Shelf Kids Club 2012*** (Top Shelf; *Andy Runton, Chris Eliopoulos,* & others): Featuring six all-ages tales, including ***Owly, Johnny Boo,*** and ***Korgi.***

•***Anti #1 Preview*** (12-Gauge; *Peter Calloway, Nathan Edmondson, Daniel Hillyard):* Meet Zachary, a faithless man forced to confront the reality that he's the savior of the world. Plus: ***The Ride*** returns from writer *Nathan Edmondson.*

•***Valiant Comics 2012 Preview*** (Valiant: *Jelena Kevic-Djurdjevic* & others): The Valiant Universe returns! X-O Manowar! Bloodshot! Harbinger! Some of the best-selling heroes of all time are back!

•***Voltron Force: Shelter From the Storm*** (Viz; *Brian Smith & Jacob Shabot):* After a mysterious disappearance, the mighty Voltron is back! Now the original Voltron pilots are training new cadets.

•***The Infernal Devices: Clockwork Angel*** (Yen; *Cassandra Clare & Hye-Kyung Baek):* Previewing a prequel to *Cassandra Clare's* ***Mortal Instruments*** series.

•***Animal Planet Presents: The World's Most Dangerous Animals 2012*** (Zenescope; *Joe Brusha* & others): Presenting terrifying encounters between man and beast.

•***Jurassic Strikeforce 5 Preview*** (Zenescope; *Joe Brusha & JL Giles-Rivera):* Jurassic StrikeForce 5's leader, Rex, tests his skills in a training session that gets out of control.

Don't want to miss out on these? The mark your calender for May 5th, 2012, 'cuz that's when the Free Comic Book Day 2012 fun takes place!

Back to Press

•***Animal Man #1 4th Printing*** (OCT118155), featuring a recolored version of the original cover, in stores 1/11.

•***Avengers: X-Sanction #1 2nd Printing Variant A*** (OCT118095), in stores 12/28.

•***Avengers: X-Sanction #1 2nd Printing Variant B*** (OCT118096), in stores 12/28.

•***Uncanny X-Men #2 2nd Printing*** (OCT118157), featuring a variant cover by *Carlos Pacheco,* in stores 1/18.

•***Wolverine & the X-Men #2 2nd Printing*** (OCT118158), featuring a variant cover by *Chris Bachalo,* in stores 1/18.

Coming Comics—Dark Horse in March

Two slayers go head to head in *Christos Gage & Rebekah Isaacs'* ***Angel & Faith #8*** as Faith faces off against a troubled Slayer *and* the Irish Mob.

Gene Luen Yang, Michael Dante DiMartino, Bryan Konietzo, & Gurihiru force Aang & Katara to face the threat of war between Fire Lord Zuko and Earth King Kuei in ***Avatar: The Last Airbender Volume 2—The Promise Part 2 TP.***

Mike Mignola, Scott Allie, & Jason Latour explore the history of vampires in ***BPRD: Hell on Earth—The Pickens County Horror #1,*** a tale of Gothic southern horror.

Buffy settles down with... Spike? That's the choice she considers in ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season 9 #7*** by *Andrew Chambliss, Georges Jeanty, &Karl Story.*

•***Channel Zero TP,*** collecting the series by *Brian Wood & Becky Cloonan* along with the prequel graphic novel ***Jennie One*** and oodles of bonus pages.

Conan and his fellow sailors fave off against the privateer Belit in ***Conan the Barbarian #2*** by *Brian Wood & Becky Cloonan.*

Neal Adams, Brian Wood, Evan Dorkin, Steve

ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT WITH HER MEMORY GONE, THE LADY SIF HAS JOURNEYED TO PLANET EARTH?
LET ME SHOW YOU, THUNDER GOD.
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Niles, Andrew Vachss, Thomas Yeates, & Geoff Darrow are just a few of the creators whose work can be found in ***Dark Horse Presents #10.***

Adam Warren presents more misadventures of the costumed crime fighter Empowered in the original graphic novel ***Empowered Volume 7 TP.***

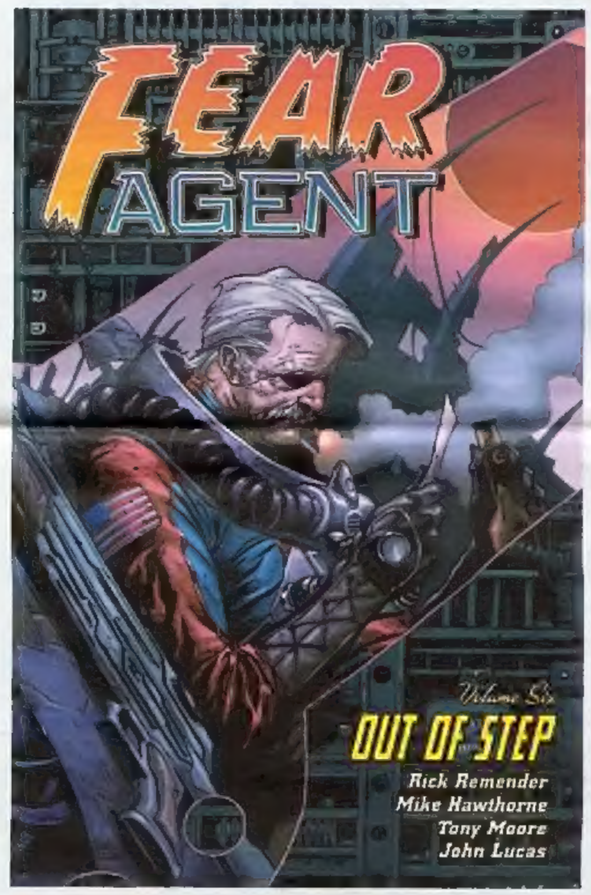
What do an overweight Portuguese werewolf, a seven-year-old girl who's actually a six thousand-year-old demon, and a downtrodden pizza boy have in common? Find out in ***The Incredible Adventures of Dog Mendonza & PizzaBoy TP*** by *Filipe Melo & Juan Cavia.*

Jan Strnad & Richard Corben reunite for ***Ragemoore,*** a dark tale of a living castle, nurtured on pagan blood, that serves as the home to deadly monsters.

Dark Horse collected editions (advance solicited for April and May release) include:

- ***Abe Sapien Volume 2: The Devil Does Not Jest & Other Stories TP,*** collecting Abe Sapien tales by *John Arcudi, James Harren, Patric Reynolds, & Peter Snejbjerg.*
- ***Archie Archives Volume 5 HC,*** collecting Archie-related pages from ***Archie Comics #s 15-18*** and ***Pep Comics #s 54-56.***
- ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season 8 Volume 1 HC,*** a 304-page volume collecting ***Buffy Season 8 #s 1-10.***
- ***Eerie Archives Volume 10 HC,*** collecting ***Eerie #s 47-51.***

- ***Marvel Classic Characters: Spider-Man Convention Exclusive,*** now offered to comic shops, depicting the classic half-Spidey, half-Peter Parker image as a syroco-style statue.



- ***Fear Agent Volume 6 TP,*** collecting the final ***Fear Agent*** story arc.
- ***FLCL Omnibus,*** collecting the entire FLCL manga adaptation with remastered story pages, a remastered script, and bonus color pages.
- ***Kult TP,*** collecting the four-issue RPG-inspired miniseries.
- ***Manara Erotica Volume 1: Click! & Other Stories HC,*** collecting all four volumes of *Milo Manara's* cleverly sexy series.
- ***The Savage Sword of Conan Volume 11 TP,*** collecting ***Savage Sword #s 110-117.***
- ***Space Family Robinson Archives Volume 4 HC,*** collecting ***Space Family Robinson: Lost in Space #s 23-31*** and ***March of Comics #320*** by *Gaylord DuBois & Dan Spiegle.*
- ***Star Wars: Invasion Volume 3—Revelations TP,*** collecting *Tom Taylor & Colin Wilson's* tale of new heroes on a new front in the Yuuzhan Vong war.
- ***Turok, Son of Stone Archives Volume 10 HC,*** collecting ***Turok #s 60-67*** by *Paul S. Newman & Alberto Giolitti.*

Dark Horse collectibles slated for March release include:

- ***Marvel Classic Characters—Fantastic Four #4: The Thing,*** a syroco-style statue limited to 650 numbered copies.

Marvel Franchise Face-Off

The Avengers. The X-Men. One has become Marvel's most popular comics franchise; the other held that title for a couple of decades. And in 2012, the two franchises are about to slug it out for Marvel Universe dominance in a six-month-long series produced by some of Marvel's most popular talents.

It's only been a couple of months since Marvel's last major event, ***Fear Itself,*** wrapped up, but now we know that the next major event is just around the corner.

Avengers Vs. X-Men, a twelve-part biweekly miniseries, will feature story by *Brian Bendis, Jason Aaron, Jonathan Hickman, Ed Brubaker, & Matt Fraction,* with art by *Frank Cho, John Romita Jr., Olivier Coipel, & Adam Kubert.* Each issue is scripted by one writer who then hands the story off to the next writer for the subsequent issue.

The series will spin out of events taking place in ***Avengers*** and ***X-Men*** books. "We have a very interesting arc for the Avengers," Bendis said. "Lately they've been wondering what it means to be an Avenger. When the world throws one terrible disaster after another at them, it takes a toll on a society—and the Avengers are left to take the blame for it. They're going to want answers." Bendis said that for X-Men, now Avengers characters like Wolverine and Storm will have a prominent role in the series.

As for Marvel's mutants, "This is something the X-Men have been headed toward since before I got involved," writer *Jason Aaron* said. "There were millions of mutants—and then, one day, that number dwindled down to a few hundred because of what Scarlet Witch did." Additionally, Hope Summer will play a prominent role in the series. "She is the mutant messiah. It's not conjecture as far as Cyclops is concerned..."

"Scarlet Witch, who has been gone for a while is back, and that's pretty exciting," writer *Matt Fraction* said of the former Avengers turned mutant pariah.

Writer *Ed Brubaker* finds it interesting that Steve Rogers and Scott Summers assume the leadership roles in the conflict, since "they're really very similar characters in their own way: they're both patriotic for their own people, and they're both willing to do anything—but I think Cyclops is probably more willing to go farther than Steve Rogers..."

Senior Vice President of Publishing *Tom Brevoort* said that "***Avengers Vs. X-Men*** is structured completely differently from any event we've ever done. Rather than having a single writer and a single voice, we've got a chorus of voices....when you read an *Ed Brubaker* issue, it'll read like one of Ed's comics, and when you read one of Matt's issues, it'll read like Matt's comics."

Additionally, Brevoort said that the recently-released ***Avengers: X-Sanction*** lays the groundwork for the event, as Cable confronts the Avengers in a mission that resonates through ***Avengers Vs. X-Men.***

The series will kick off with a special ***Avengers Vs. X-Men #0*** that will feature a full new story, illustrated by *Frank Cho,* that sets the events of the miniseries into motion.

For readers worrying about the number of books that might be involved in an event of this magnitude, Brevoort stressed that the event would *not* cross over into every Marvel Universe book, but it *would* involve all the ***Avengers*** and ***X-Men*** titles... with one exception. "The one book that's *not* going to be touched by this, and it's a very deliberate choice on our part, is the new ***Avengers Assembled*** series (by *Brian Bendis & Mark Bagley*)," he said. Instead, it will feature stories of the most famous Avengers—Thor, Captain America, Iron Man, Hulk, and Hawkeye—to take advantage of reader interest spurred by the upcoming film.

Avengers Vs. X-Men #1 is slated for April release.

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YOU WOULD DARE STOP ME FROM FOLLOWING MY BELOVED TO EARTH?
NOT I, DEAR BROTHER!
BUT LORD ODIN HAS FORBIDDEN ANY ASGARDIAN TO JOURNEY TO EARTH—
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-16
—UNDER PENALTY OF ETERNAL BANISHMENT FROM THE REALM!
THOR! REMEMBER ODIN'S WARNING!
NAY! IF MY BELOVED SIF HAS FLED TO EARTH—
THEN I MUST GO TO HER—
—EVEN IF IT MEANS I CAN NE'ER RETURN TO ASGARD!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-17
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